

by John Fritze

Rep. Steny Hoyer, the second-highest ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives, sent a letter Friday to members of the House Appropriations Committee asking them to reconsider the decision to strip funding for the James Webb Space Telescope at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt.

A House appropriations subcommittee with oversight of NASA and other agencies approved a spending bill Thursday that would cut funding for the project, which is the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope. The program is more than \$1.5 billion over budget and its launch has been delayed to 2018 at the earliest. Maryland lawmakers have been pushing back on the cuts.

"The telescope is in fabrication with the mirror finished and other components nearly complete," the Southern Maryland lawmaker, whose district includes Goddard, wrote in the letter. "It would be devastating to lose the project at this juncture."

The full letter, addressed to Rep. Hal Rogers, the Kentucky Republican who chairs the House Appropriations Committee, is available after the jump:

Dear Chairman Rogers:

The Subcommittee-reported FY2012 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill eliminates funding for the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). The JWST is of critical importance to the mission of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA)

Goddard Space Flight Center in my district and is an investment of national and global significance in the future of space astronomy and astrophysics. The full Committee will consider this bill next week, and I urge the Committee to continue to provide funds for this critical project. Among its merits:

- **Scientific Discovery.** The JWST is designed to be the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope which is presently used by more than 8,000 scientists. Its observational capabilities will allow those scientists to continue their work and support the next generation of discovery.
- **Job Creation.** In addition to supporting researchers, JWST is supporting 2000 full time private sector jobs in 22 states. 500 of these jobs are in Maryland, and 250 at Goddard.
- **U.S. Prominence and Leadership.** JWST technologies are unique to the United States, and will ensure American dominance in space observation.

The Committee has already provided \$3 billion for JWST. The telescope is in fabrication with the mirror finished and other components nearly complete. It would be devastating to lose the project at this juncture. It is my hope the Committee can rectify the situation for the benefit of the country.